

1623 6TH ST.
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(714) 398-5514

Dear Cesar and members of the National Executive Board:

I am writing in response to your memorandum on "Business," dated July 13, 1977, which was announced to our staff in Coachella while I was working on a hearing in Riverside. I apologize for being slow in my response.

The memorandum itself seriously disturbs me. Paragraphs #1, #2, #4, #6, and #7 stress "Business." Paragraphs #3 and #5, quite out of context, stress "purpose" and "goals."

The "business" of any "business Enterprise" is to maximize income and minimize expenses, whether over a shorter or longer running period depending on business strategy. The Teamsters Union is a "business union," which seeks to maximize dues and income, and minimize expenses. Safeway is a "business enterprise" with the same business.

Since we live in a capitalist society, any enterprise in this society is going to have to pay attention to "business" aspects of its work. Even a guerrilla movement will have to figure the costs of buying or stealing weapons, and where that money will come from. Even a good bank robber must figure his "costs" as against real and anticipated income. However, the robber is a "business" man, seeking to maximize profits and minimize expenses, while for the guerrilla movement, its business aspects are merely incidental to rather different goals.

I have never considered this union a "business enterprise," an enterprise set up for "business" purposes. And it worries me that the Executive Board seems to confuse "goals" and "purpose" with business. Surely we have "business" goals, similar to the goals of any business, to minimize our expenses, such as benefits to staff, office expenses, and administrative expenses; and to maximize our income, dues, donations, whatever. But such "business" goals are merely to facilitate the attainment of the real goals of the union, they are a means to an end, not the end in itself (as "profit" would seem to be in the Teamsters Union or Safeway).

Compare our Medical Plan to that of the Teamsters, and you immediately see the difference. We want to maximize the amount of money the Plan pays to any worker -- we search for hours of family members or hours at other companies to give the worker every penny to which he is entitled. Our goal in this case is service, which is not necessarily good business. Obviously, there are limits to such service; the Plan has rules to maximize the benefits we give according to the amount of money in the Plan. We may decide that more or less money invested in the administration of the plan, either in computers and equipment or greater phone budgets or more clinics and doctors, or more benefits for the staff, will increase or decrease the service we can provide the workers, and make such administrative or business decisions with that goal in mind. But since the goal of the Teamster plan was to show a profit, the easiest way to minimize

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costs was to minimize service. Growers and Teamsters found that workers would still vote for them, even though no services were provided, so with good business rational, they avoided that unnecessary expense.

For me, the goal of the Union, as a union of farm workers, is to give farm workers the maximum possible control over their own lives, without exploiting others; a maximum possible voice in those decisions affecting their lives.

This goal involves educating and organizing farm workers to want that power over their own lives, to reject the present system of powerlessness and exploitation, to believe that an alternative system is possible and necessary. It involves educating farm workers to reject exploitation in their own lives, over their own wives and children and fellow workers, as a means of getting ahead within the present system. We who did not grow up in the farm worker community, or left it and have now returned with new ideas, have a responsibility to urge farm workers to reject the present system and seek alternatives. Thus each of us on Union staff is an "agitator." We should take pride in the title.

With such a broad goal, the Union will, of course have to go beyond the work place, beyond the contracts, to all aspects of decision making in this society which affect farm workers. Such a goal involves building a new society, inhabited by a radically different farm worker. Such a goal involves building institutional power for the Union itself, so that it may speak with power and strength to other institutions in this society which presently make decisions affecting farm workers. Such a goal involves politics, day-to-day maneuvering, compromises, strategy, with other powers in this society. Such a goal involves good "business practices," rational practices within the Union to enable it to survive and grow and move towards its goals.

But to me, it is clear that the Union must seek to destroy those "business enterprises" and their "business practices" which presently exploit farm workers in so many ways in this "business" society. With other forces seeking such change, we must dream of the day when we can transform this entire society from its present system in service to business, to a new system in service to life. You of course have my total opposition to making this a "business union" or "business enterprise," as the writer of your memorandum seems to want.

Viva la Causa,

Doug Adair
Legal Department, Coachella



UNITED FARM WORKERS of AMERICA AFL-CIO

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MEMORANDUM

TO: National Executive Board Members, Department Heads,
Movement Entity Heads, Staff

FROM: Cesar E. Chavez, President

DATE: July 13, 1977

RE: Union Business and Purpose

1. A clear, simple and penetrating theory of the business rather than intuition, characterizes the truly successful entrepreneur (all of us on staff are entrepreneurs) who must build an organization to endure and grow long after he is gone.

2. What is our business, what it will be and what should it be is the central question. Unless the basic concepts on which a business has been built are visible, clearly understandable, and explicitly expressed, the business enterprise is at the mercy of events. Not understanding what it is, what it represents, what its basic concepts, values, policies and beliefs are, it cannot rationally change itself.

3. Only a clear definition of the mission and purpose of the Union makes possible clear and realistic Union objectives. That is the foundation for priorities, strategies, plans and work assignments. It is the starting point for the design of managerial jobs and for the design of managerial structures. Structure follows strategy.

4. It may mean that not answering this question is the single most important reason for our frustrations and our failures lately. For our own salvation we must raise the question of what is our business clearly and deliberately, and answer it thoughtfully and thoroughly. This question will cause counter argument and disagreement.

5. Once we find the answer, we are going to have radical innovations in Union plans and approaches and how we do things. It will mean continually inundating the staff with the purposes and goals, and the spirit necessary to bring these purposes to fruition.

6. What is our business is a genuine decision and a genuine decision must be based on divergent views to have a chance to be a right and effective decision. The answer is always a

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6 choice between alternatives. It is always a high risk decision. It always leads to changes in objectives, strategies, organization and behavior. Choice must be alternatives rather than on suppression of different and dissenting points of view.

7 With this introduction, I am asking that each member of the staff as an individual (not as a group) seriously think through with careful thought and deliberation the following questions:

- 1) WHAT IS OUR UNION BUSINESS?
- 2) WHAT SHOULD OUR UNION BUSINESS BE?

8 Responses to these questions will be carefully reviewed and studied by the Executive Board of the Union. From these the future goals, purposes and objectives will be formulated. All future plans and activities will then be directed toward these goals and purposes.

All responses must be in the Office of the President by Monday, July 25.

CEC:ew